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SUBJECT: RUMORS OF EARLY DNI KNOWLEDGE OF SALVADORAN MILITARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE JESUIT MURDERS

[REDACTED] POSSIBILITY THAT U.S. MEDIA WILL SOON REPORT ALLEGATIONS SUGGESTING THAT OFFICIALS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE (DNI), AND POSSIBLY U.S. ADVISORS THERE, WERE AWARE AS EARLY AS THE MORNING OF 16 NOVEMBER 1989 THAT THE SALVADORAN MILITARY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MURDERS OF THE JESUIT PRIESTS EARLIER THAT MORNING.

2. THE STORY CURRENTLY MAKING THE ROUNDS [REDACTED] IS THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE AT A 16 NOVEMBER MORNING MEETING AT DNI HEADQUARTERS THAT REVEREND ELLACURIA HAD BEEN KILLED "TRYING TO ESCAPE" OR "RESISTING ARREST" (IMPLYING BY THOSE PHRASES THAT HE HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE MILITARY); THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS GREETED BY APPLAUSE, PROMPTING ONE OFFICER TO DECLARE THAT RESPONSE IN-APPROPRIATE AND SHORT-SIGHTED IN TERMS OF WHAT THE EVENT WOULD MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY; AND THAT THOSE PRESENT OR AWARE OF THE EVENTS OF THE MEETING WERE PART OF A COVER-UP INASMUCH AS THEY DID NOT COME FORWARD WITH THIS INFORMATION. THIS STORY, OR VARIATIONS ON THE THEME, HAVE GAINED ENOUGH CURRENCY AMONG THE U.S. MEDIA REPS HERE THAT WE EXPECT WE MAY WELL SEE SOME REFERENCE TO IT IN THE U.S. MEDIA.

3. [REDACTED] INVESTIGATED THESE ALLEGATIONS AND HAS DETERMINED THAT:

A. THERE WAS A MEETING OF PRINCIPAL DNI OFFICERS ON 16 NOVEMBER, AT 0700 OR 0730 HOURS. DNI INITIATED EARLY MORNING MEETINGS AS A RESULT OF THE FMLN OFFENSIVE THAT BEGAN 11 NOVEMBER.

[REDACTED]

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B. NO U.S. PERSONNEL WERE PRESENT.

C. AT SOME POINT IN THE MEETING, DNI CHIEF OF OPERATIONS CAPTAIN HERRERA INTERRUPTED THE MEETING AND IN A QUIET ASIDE TO (THEN) DNI DIRECTOR COLONEL GUZMAN AGUILAR SAID HE HAD JUST HEARD ON THE RADIO OF THE KILLINGS OF ELLACURIA AND OTHER JESUITS. (NOTE: A STORY IS CIRCULATING THAT THE "RADIO" HERRERA HAD LEARNED THE NEWS FROM WAS THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES TACTICAL NET, SUGGESTING HE HAD MONITORED A MILITARY CALL WHICH IMPLICATED THE MILITARY IN THE MURDERS. HERRERA ENTERED THE MEETING WITH HIS MX RADIO IN HAND. THIS IS NOT UNCOMMON, BUT MAY BE THE GENESIS OF THIS ACCOUNT.) HERRERA HAS SAID HE HEARD THE NEWS ON "COMMERCIAL RADIO".

BECAUSE OF THE "STATE OF EXCEPTION" DECLARED BY THE PRESIDENT SHORTLY AFTER THE OFFENSIVE BEGAN, LOCAL COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS DID NOT BEGIN BROADCASTING UNTIL LATER THAT MORNING, BUT THAT THE NEWS WAS OUT ON THE WIRE SERVICES AND WAS BROADCAST BY SHORT WAVE COMMERCIAL RADIO STATIONS FROM OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY, WHICH WERE HEARD IN SAN SALVADOR AS EARLY AS 0630 THAT MORNING. DNI REGULARLY MONITORS SHORT WAVE BROADCASTS IN THE EARLY MORNING.)

D. UPON RECEIVING THE NEWS FROM CAPTAIN HERRERA, COLONEL GUZMAN REPEATED IT TO THOSE IN ATTENDANCE. SOME DID REACT SPONTANEOUSLY WITH APPLAUSE. COLONEL ROBERTO PINEDA GUERRA, THEN DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL AND PRESENT AT THE MEETING, INTERVENED, POINTING OUT BOTH THE INAPPROPRIATENESS AND THE SHORTSIGHTEDNESS OF THAT REACTION.

4. AMBASSADOR, DCM AND SOME OTHER SENIOR EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE AWARE OF THE RUMORS, THE SPECULATION.